

Iowa Department of Human Services

Offer #401-HHS-008: Successful Transition to Adulthood

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This offer includes the following appropriations:

Child and Family Services, General Administration

Program Description:

The purpose of the Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) program is to ensure that youth in foster care are better prepared for the challenges and opportunities that adulthood presents, and that resources invested while they are young pay off over the long term.

Prior to PAL, once a child had aged-out of foster care, he or she would lose the emotional and financial stability provided by the foster system. The challenges young people face when they age out of foster care is well-documented. Compared to their same age peers, youth aging-out have limited education and employment experience, poor mental and physical health and a high likelihood of experiencing unwanted outcomes such as homelessness, incarceration and pregnancy. If these youths are fortunate enough to go to college, they often have no “home” to return to during summer breaks or for the holidays. There is often no parent available to help with emergency childcare or a loan to get through until payday. Many youth who have aged-out of foster care have no one they consider family.

Data from the “*Midwest Study of Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth*” by Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, a large scale longitudinal study of Iowa, Wisconsin and Illinois youth, found that former foster care youth participating in the study were twice as likely as their same age peers to be unable to pay their rent or mortgage. Another large-scale longitudinal study by the Casey Family Programs found that more than one-fifth of former foster care youths experienced homelessness for one day or more within a year of aging out.

Who:

Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) Program

PAL serves Iowa youth who leave State-paid foster care at the age of 18 or older and who are no longer eligible for voluntary foster care and who are engaged in one or both of the following:

- Enrollment in a post secondary educational training program or work training
- Employment

Each year approximately 450 youth in Iowa reach their 18th birthday while in foster care; that is, they are neither reunited with their birth families by the time they reach 18 nor placed in a permanent family through adoption or guardianship; of those, approximately 425 are in State paid foster care.

Children are eligible to continue in foster care on a voluntary basis past their 18th birthday only when they are still working toward their high school diploma or GED and meet one of the following conditions.

- Through age 18 if they are living in family foster care.
- Through age 19 if they are living in a supervised apartment setting.
- Entry into foster care is approved by the DHS Service Area Manager at age 18 or 19 due to imminent risk of becoming homeless.

What:

The PAL Program provides three additional years of support to allow these young adults more time to mature, learn skills to survive as adults, and to build the relationships that will be their support in adulthood.

Specifically, the PAL program provides financial support to eligible youth who are receiving aftercare services. Aftercare services include case management support and services linking youth to community resources to assist them in their transition to self-sufficiency.

In SFY 2010, youth enrolled in Iowa's PAL Program were eligible for additional financial support via a monthly stipend at a maximum of \$574 as well as aftercare case management services. The amount of the stipend depends on a youth's earned and unearned income, as well as need.

How:

Program

Youth in PAL receive aftercare services in addition to the PAL stipend through a contractual arrangement with a network of child welfare providers (known as the Iowa Aftercare Services Network). The primary goal of the program is for youth to achieve self-sufficiency through youth driven goals and to recognize and accept their personal responsibility for the transition from adolescence to adulthood. Services include case management, assisting the youth in developing self-sufficiency plans, counseling, assisting with community referrals for services and assisting the youth in securing employment, applying for SSI and completing the financial aid forms for youth wanting to attend college. The PAL component is primarily State-funded but has been supplemented in the past 3 years with Federal funds from the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP).

Other Transition to Adulthood Programs Not Included in This Offer

*elevate*TM

*elevate*TM provides, through local chapters, a forum for current and former foster care youth to connect with peers, develop leadership skills and advocate for improvements in the child welfare system. In SFY 2010 there were nine chapters across the State and about 300 members. Funding is from State and Federal Chafee dollars. The State funds are within Offer #401-HHS-007 Child Welfare/Juvenile Justice Community Services.

Aftercare Services

The DHS aftercare program provides supports and services (as described above) to youth and young adults ages 18 to 21 who have exited foster care and are participating in PAL as well as those who are not eligible for PAL (due to several causes, including not being in State paid foster care at 18 but rather in foster care with a non-licensed care provider such as a relative, not electing to stay in State paid foster care past age 18 if eligible, not working/attending school as required). Eleven agencies

participate in a statewide network that provides services. During SFY 2010, an average of 147 youth per month received basic aftercare services (with an additional average of 307 youth per month participating in the PAL program). DHS also funds ongoing evaluation of the program. Aftercare is funded with Federal funds from the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP).

Education & Training Vouchers (ETV)

This program provides college financial assistance to youth who age out of foster care or who were adopted/entered a subsidized guardianship arrangement after the age of 16. The program provided 177 youth a total of \$478,619 in training and education vouchers in SFY 2010. The ETV program is funded by Federal funds from the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP).

All Iowa Opportunity Foster Care Grant Program

This program provides college financial assistance to youth who age out of foster care and attend post-secondary education in Iowa. The program provided 129 youth a total of \$610,155 for post secondary education in SFY 2010. The program is administered by the Iowa College Student Aid Commission and is funded with State funds.

Medicaid for Independent Young Adults (MIYA)

The purpose of the MIYA program is to provide continued health care coverage to young adults transitioning from state care to young adulthood. Youth covered by the MIYA program receive the same services as any other child under 21 who is eligible for Medicaid through existing Medicaid provider networks. Youth transitioning out of foster care are automatically reviewed for MIYA eligibility without filing a new Medicaid application. MIYA provided Medicaid coverage to an annual average 425 eligible youth in SFY 2010 who were: under age 21, were in a State paid foster care placement when they turned age 18, left foster care on or after May 1, 2006, and have countable income under 200% of the Federal poverty level. The State funds are within Offer #401-HHS-003 Medical Services.

Service Delivery

DHS child welfare caseworkers in local offices are responsible for providing information to youth in foster care about the PAL program and other benefits available to them after they leave foster care at age 18. Five (5) DHS Transition Specialists who are located in the DHS service area offices also provide the following services. The five Transition Specialists are Federally-funded by the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP).

- Provide oversight and monitoring within their respective service areas regarding the overall transition planning process to ensure effectiveness, including results based youth-centered transition planning for each youth in foster care, age 16 and older, completion and regular review/update of the transition plan.
- Develop and deliver formal and informal training, based on service area needs, to internal and external staff and key stakeholders to facilitate understanding and implementation of a youth-centered transition process founded on evidence based and best practice principles and procedures.
- Provide consultation to assist DHS and Juvenile Court Services (JCS) staff in linking youth in care to appropriate community resources and assist DHS and JCS staff, as appropriate, with difficult to transition cases.
- Assist local transition committees and communities to identify and address gaps and barriers in community services and supports to successful transition through collaboration.

- Determine eligibility for aftercare/PAL services for youth aging out of care and work with the aftercare providers to assist with the self-sufficiency plan for youth once out of care.
- Work with the ETV coordinator regarding getting youth post-secondary financial aid and assist in ensuring that the youth continue to get Medicaid once they have aged out of care (Medicaid coverage group – MIYA – Medicaid for Independent Youth Adults).

Service Support

- Contract Management: DHS maintains a contract with a private agency for the delivery of aftercare services to support youth. This includes managing the procurement process and monitoring contractor performance.
- Program support: DHS staff are responsible for developing and maintaining the administrative rules and employees' manual for the program, to ensure compliance with all relevant State and Federal laws and regulations. Overall program support for DHS's transition program is provided by the DHS Transition planning program manager, whose position is also Federally-funded by the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP).
- Program monitoring: DHS staff monitor program outcomes, manage program improvement plans, and provide data to staff, policy makers and the general public.
- Federal programs: DHS staff complete all state plans, state plan amendments, and program reporting required to claim Federal funding. DHS staff also coordinate preparation for periodic Federal program reviews.
- Constituent relations: DHS staff work with constituent groups (e.g., *elevate*TM) and respond to constituent complaints and questions, as well as responding to appeals and requests for exceptions to policy.
- Information technology: Includes Iowa's child welfare information system that will support the new National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD), mandated by the Federal government.
- Financial accountability: Includes budgeting, accounting, Federal/State reporting, cost allocation, and audit coordination and resolution.
- Provider payment: Includes distributing provider/vendor payments.
- Corporate leadership: Includes overall agency strategic management and accountability for the achievement of results.

Results Achieved:

Result:	SFY 2010 Actual Level	SFY 2011 Budget Level	SFY 2012 Offer Level
Participants finish high school or receive a GED *	71%	83%	83%
Participants hold a job for 3 or more consecutive months	63%	67%	67%

*The data provided encompasses all aftercare participants who exited during SFY 2010, which includes PAL participants as well as youth participating in the Federally-funded "basic" aftercare program. PAL participants, because high school graduation or GED is required at entry, is 100%. For other youth participating in "basic" aftercare, graduation is a strongly encouraged goal.

Sustaining service delivery assumes the level of funding requested in the offer as well as full funding of salary adjustment. If funding is insufficient in either area, results to be achieved will be modified to reflect the impact.

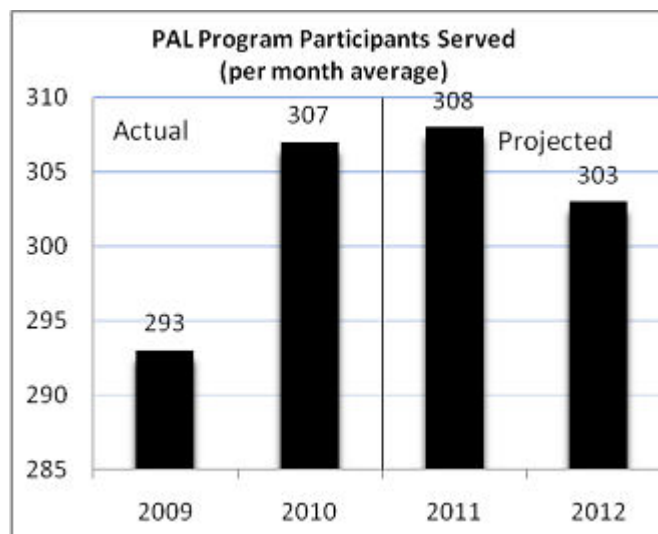
To sustain existing services and growth in programs this offer assumes that status quo as well as all one-time funding such as the cash reserve fund, underground storage tank fund and government stabilization and stimulus dollars are fully replaced. If these dollars are not available in SFY 2012, there will be significant program reductions and negative impacts such as elimination of services, disenrollment of clients, and implementation of wait lists and the possible closure of facilities. If funding is insufficient, results to be achieved will be modified to reflect the impact.

Impact of Proposed Budget on Results:

Current Results:

This offer continues the PAL program for youth under age 21 who were in a State-paid foster care placement when they turned age 18 and met eligibility criteria on or after May 1, 2006.

- SFY 2011 will mark the fifth year of the PAL program. Enrollment is expected to stabilize at approximately 308 youth per month by SFY 2011. The chart shows enrollment trends since the program began in SFY 2007. The numbers of youth "aging out" of foster care are expected to remain between 450 and 475 youth per year (aged out in SFY 2006: 469, SFY 2007: 455, SFY 2008: 482). The number of older youth (16+) in foster care has been decreasing somewhat since 2006, but the number of youth aging out is expected to remain steady.
- The \$2.8 M SFY 2010 PAL State appropriation funded a maximum average of 259 youth per month and was insufficient to serve all eligible youth. The SFY 2010 average monthly enrollment of 307 exceeded that number. To offset the shortfall and delay a waiting list, DHS diverted Federal (Chafee) funding and funds for provider performance incentives to cover additional PAL participants. An estimated monthly average of 303 youth are expected to participate in the PALS program in SFY 2012. Status quo State funding at the SFY 2011 State appropriation level is estimated to be sufficient to cover a monthly average of 259 (excluding any rate increase). This offer assumes that \$400,000 in Federal Chafee funding will be available in SFY 2012 to fund approximately 37 cases. Additional State funds are required to cover the remaining 7 cases and avoid a waiting list.



The Youth Policy Institute routinely collects results data from Aftercare Service Network providers about PAL program participants. This data indicates that PAL program participants show increases in education and employment

- 93% have finished high school or received a GED.
- 63% have held a job for 3 or more consecutive months.
- 75% have a monthly budget to cover expenses.

DHS will continue implementation of several activities in SFY 2011 to improve outcomes for youth that transition from foster care at age 18.

- The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act, enacted October 7, 2008, created a new opportunity for states to access Federal funds to support extending foster care past age 18. The Iowa Children's Justice Initiative recently created a taskforce to assess the fiscal and programmatic implications of extending care to 21. The Finance Project (funded by the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative) is providing no-cost technical assistance for programmatic exploration of the option to extend foster care in Iowa and will also lead a fiscal mapping effort to determine cost estimates. Final recommendations will be presented to the Children's Justice State Council before the end of calendar 2010.
- DHS solicited bidders in SFY 2010 for the management and delivery of PAL and aftercare services. Youth and Shelter Services, Inc. (YSS) was awarded the contract (YSS has been the contractor for delivery of PAL and aftercare services since the beginning of the aftercare program in 2002). The contract includes performance measures and benchmarks drawn from the data that has been collected related to the program goals.
- DHS will be developing the new National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) mandated by the Federal government. NYTD will include data on transition services provided to youth while they are in foster care and after they turn age 18, as well as data on outcomes for youth who transition from foster care to young adulthood. States are required to begin collecting data October 1, 2010.

Legal Requirements:

Federal:

Federal requirements related to foster care and transition are contained in Title IV-E of the Social Security Act, especially the Chafee Foster Care Independence Act.

State:

State requirements related to foster care and transition are found in Chapters 232 and 234 of the Iowa Code and 441 IAC 187 and 202.11.